



United States Department of the Interior
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To: State Leadership Team

From: State Director

Subject: Policy on Employment of Relatives

There are instances within the State wherein BLM employees' relatives have been hired and are presently employed, many times within the same organization as another relative. It is, therefore, necessary that all managers and supervisors understand the parameters under which relatives can be hired and supervised within the workforce.

It is Departmental, Bureau, and State policy to prevent any instances of favoritism in the hiring and employment of relatives, a practice known as "Nepotism". Nepotism is prohibited by law (5 U.S.C. 3110). The law states that you may not "advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a position over which you exercise jurisdiction or control for your relatives." This policy is further reinforced in 5 U.S.C. 2302 (Prohibited Personnel Practices) which states that one may not "illegally discriminate for or against any employee/applicant" and 5 U.S.C. 2301 (Merit Systems Principles), which states that one must "Recruit, select, and advance on merit after open and fair competition".

It is critical that all managers, supervisors, and others who have influence over the selection process, ensure that an open and fair competition is maintained pertaining to all types of hiring authorities. Managers must ensure that all competitive actions are disseminated to as wide a range of potential candidates as necessary to ensure that a good range of candidates is available. Managers, as always, should provide strong rationale as to why one candidate is selected over another.

If a situation exists where several relatives are employed within the same organization (Field Office, Division, etc.), there must be no instances where one employee/relative supervises another relative, whether directly or indirectly supervised. The mere perception that this

situation exists is enough to warrant a review. The ability to influence a relative's compensation, awards, leave, or work program is also prohibited.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Mark Whitesell, Human Resources Officer, at 602-417-9270.

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